

Minutes of Meeting
State Soil Conservation Board
Indiana Government Center, Conference Room 1
402 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana
9:00 a.m., Tuesday, June 10, 2003

Present:

David L. Avery
Ellsworth P. Christmas
Karen L. Dehne
Peter A. Hippensteel
O. William Mann
Travis E. Nolcox
Garry Tom

Absent:

Paul J. Ehret

Others present:

Ronald G. Birt
Randy J. Braun
Sherman Bryant
Douglas Campbell
Dorothy A. Corns
Jim Druin
James B. Farr
Jill E. Hoffmann
Dwayne P. Howard

James M. Krejci
Michael K. Molnar
Richard Nielson
Harry S. Nikides
Gail L. Peas
James K. Ray
Kent D. Tracey

Chairman Peter Hippensteel called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. Changes to the agenda were requested by Division agricultural conservation specialist Jim Farr for presentation of a Lake Lemon lake and river enhancement project completion report, and by IASWCD president Sherman Bryant and NRCS assistant state conservationist Dwayne Howard, both requesting earlier presentation of their reports due to other scheduling commitments.

Draft Minutes of April 8, 2003

Typographic corrections were noted.

Ellsworth Christmas moved to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Karen Dehne and carried.

Supervisor Resignations/Appointments

Conservation program coordinator Jim Krejci presented the recommendation for temporary appointment of Curtis Wischmeier in Jackson. The temporary appointment is necessary because the district failed to meet the deadline for submitting names of nominees for election. Wischmeier, a grain and livestock farmer, has previously served as a district supervisor.

Krejci presented the resignation of Lenny Sams (E-04, Switzerland) and recommendation for temporary appointment of Joe Spiller. Sams' resignation is due to his having moved outside the county. Spiller utilizes conservation practices on his tobacco-hay-cattle operation and has been employed at the county health department.

David Avery moved to accept the resignation of Lenny Sams in Switzerland and to approve the temporary appointments of Curtis Wischmeier in Jackson and Joe Spiller

in Switzerland until the districts' next annual meetings. The motion was seconded by Garry Tom and carried.

Clean Water Indiana

Division director Harry Nikides distributed copies of a Clean Water Indiana project report summary, detailing types of projects, grant amounts, percentage of completion, matching dollars, and in-kind match for each district. Nikides reported that he has discussed project changes with staff at Floyd, Madison, Pulaski, and Tippecanoe SWCDs. Most of the change requests involve activities similar to previously approved projects.

State Association President's Report

Sherm Bryant reported on various association activities including status of the IASWCD business plan, EPA Section 319 grant applications to fund new and revised staffing positions, and upcoming meetings. Executive director April Ingle submitted her resignation to accept a position with the Georgia River Network. The executive committee will meet later today, and the next IASWCD board of directors' meeting is scheduled for July 31.

NRCS State Conservationist's Report

Assistant state conservationist Dwayne Howard distributed copies of informational materials and presented updates on Farm Bill programs administered through NRCS. Howard reviewed cost-share rates and practice eligibility, including funding status for EQIP, WRP, WHIP, Farmland Protection, and other conservation programs. Further information is available on the NRCS website, with listings for each county.

Fiscal Year 2003-2004 Agreements with Purdue University and USDA-NRCS

Harry Nikides advised that staff is drafting the agreements for the Division with Purdue University and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. Allotment totals are currently being analyzed relative to funding the agreements.

Soil and Water Quality Programs

Education and SWCD Support:

Jim Krejci reported that weather conditions have delayed transects in some counties; about 60 percent of the counties are being included in the current year study.

Staff has been assisting with documentation for the Lake Michigan Coastal Program, as well as working with districts on business plans. Conservation program specialist Mark Evans is developing a grant request to document the history of no-till in Indiana and to create a display illustrating changing practices for use at the Farm Progress Show. Staff is also working with NRCS on materials to document the soil quality relationships between no-till and carbon sequestration. Preparations are underway to ready the Pathway to Water Quality exhibit at the State Fairgrounds. Final arrangements are being made for the Summer Splash meeting to be held at Nashville on August 1-2,

and the summer series of Hoosier Riverwatch and Project WET workshops are underway. Conservation program specialist Harold Doremire's retirement recognition will be held on June 27 at Lafayette.

Stormwater and Sediment Control:

Stormwater and sediment control program chief Randy Braun reported that districts have begun returning responses to claim eligible shares of the Rule 5 fee distribution, representing revenues collected by IDEM between July 1, 2000, and June 30, 2002. The total available for distribution is \$85,830. Staff is currently analyzing the impact of MS4s on the Rule 5 fee collections.

Lake and River Enhancement:

Land and water conservation program chief Jim Ray distributed copies of House Enrolled Act 1336 and a draft summary of the legislation's impact on lake and river enhancement activities. The boat fee increase is a result of recommendations by the Lakes Management Work Group, with a portion of the revenues to be used for sediment removal and control of exotic or invasive plants or animals. The new rates become effective on January 1, 2004. Staff and Board members discussed possible strategies for determining how best to use the funds. Staff was instructed to begin formulating ideas for presentation at a late-summer/early-fall State Board meeting, with possible public meetings at a later date to gather input from lake interest groups and other citizens. Discussion on the topic will continue at the Board's August meeting, and comments or suggestions may be sent to Jim Ray during the interim. Copies of DNR's 2003 edition of *The Handbook of Indiana Boating Laws and Responsibilities* were distributed for further reference to the fee increase.

Division aquatic biologist Jill Hoffmann presented the completion report for the Curtis Creek watershed diagnostic study (Newton and Jasper counties). The State Board approved funding in July 2001, with Newton SWCD leading the initiative. Using a slide presentation, Hoffmann discussed watershed characteristics and the findings and recommendations of the study. Significant concerns identified in the study included management practices at a very large livestock operation in the Headwaters subwatershed (north) and on-going sewerage discharge from a wastewater treatment facility at the I-65 and SR 114 interchange in the Yeoman Ditch subwatershed (south). Follow-up with the county health department and the drainage board may be necessary to help resolve or forestall pollution issues. Various land management treatment and livestock operation practices were recommended in the study, along with public education and outreach efforts. LARE contributed \$35,633 toward the \$39,592 study, with a balance of \$5,345 remaining to be paid. Staff recommends Board acceptance of the study and final payment to the district. State Board members further inquired concerning status of the water treatment facility and manure management practices at the dairy operation.

David Avery moved to accept the Curtis Creek watershed diagnostic study report as presented and to make final payment of \$5,345 to Newton SWCD. The motion was seconded by Travis Nolcox and carried.

Hoffmann presented the completion report for the Jimmerson Lake diagnostic study (Steuben County). The Board approved LARE funding to the Jimmerson Lake Association in July 2002, and the study was carried out by Commonwealth Biomonitoring. Using slides, Hoffmann discussed lake

and watershed characteristics and reviewed the conclusions and recommendations reported in the study. LARE contributed \$13,500 toward the \$15,000 study, and a balance of \$2,025 remains to be paid. Staff recommends Board acceptance of the study and final payment to the lake association.

Karen Dehne moved to accept the Jimmerson Lake diagnostic study report as presented and to make final payment of \$2,025 to the Jimmerson Lake Association. The motion was seconded by Bill Mann and carried.

Agriculture conservation specialist Kent Tracey presented the completion report for the Big Turkey Lake bank stabilization design-build project on Mud Creek (Steuben County). The Big Turkey Lake Improvement Association coordinated activities and shared local funding with the Steuben County Drainage Board and the county highway department. Using slides, Tracey described work that had been accomplished to control sediment reaching the lake. LARE funding contributed \$74,730 toward the \$94,640 project, and a balance of \$11,209.50 remains to be paid. Staff recommends Board acceptance of the project completion report and final payment to the lake association.

Ellsworth Christmas moved to accept the Big Turkey Lake bank stabilization report as presented and to make final payment of \$11,209.50 to the Big Turkey Lake Improvement Association. The motion was seconded by Karen Dehne and carried.

Tracey presented the completion report for the Little Barbee Lake feasibility study for watershed improvement projects along the Putney Ditch (Kosciusko County). The Barbee Lake Property Owners Association sponsored the project, at a total cost of \$17,969, with LARE contributing \$16,172. A balance of \$4,238.35 remains to be paid. Tracey discussed the project and plans for improvements. Staff recommends Board acceptance of the project completion report and final payment to the lake association.

Garry Tom moved to accept the Barbee Lake/Putney Ditch feasibility study report as presented and to make final payment to the Barbee Lake Property Owners Association in the amount of \$4,238.35. The motion was seconded by Bill Mann and carried.

Tracey presented a consultant selection report for the Indian Lakes Chain engineering feasibility and design study (LaGrange County). The Five Lakes Conservation Association interviewed three consultants and selected J.F. New & Associates to conduct the study, at a total cost of \$40,000, with LARE contributing \$36,000. A sediment trap on Wolcott Lake and a constructed wetland on Witmer Lake have been proposed. Funding from a concurrent US EPA Section 319 grant will supplement watershed improvement activities. Staff recommends acceptance of the consultant selection.

David Avery moved to accept the Five Lakes Conservation Association's selection of J.F. New & Associates to carry out the engineering feasibility/design study as presented. The motion was seconded by Travis Nolcox and carried.

Tracey presented a consultant selection report for the Webster Lake engineering feasibility study (Kosciusko County). The Webster Lake Association interviewed four consultants and selected J.F. New & Associates to conduct the study, at a total cost of \$21,660. Redirection of \$21,000 in LARE funding was approved in April 2003, in accordance with a proposal submitted to the State Board to

carry out watershed improvements, including wetland and prairie planting, wetland restoration, erosion control at a bridge crossing, and storm drain mapping around Webster Lake. Staff recommends acceptance of the consultant selection.

Garry Tom moved to accept the Webster Lake Association's selection of J.F. New & Associates to carry out the engineering feasibility study as presented. The motion was seconded by Karen Dehne and carried.

Jim Farr presented the completion report for Lake Lemon shoreline stabilization (Brown and Monroe counties). The Lake Lemon Conservancy District sponsored the project at a total cost of \$105,000, with LARE contributing \$78,750. Farr described work activity, which included a rip-rap breakwater and bio-engineered stabilization practices designed by Donan Engineering, Inc. The Lake Lemon Conservancy District enthusiastically supported the project and provided a floating barrier 30-40 feet offshore to prevent recreational use of restored area while vegetation became established. A balance of \$11,775.70 remains to be paid. Staff recommends acceptance of the project completion and final payment to LLC.

David Avery moved to accept the Lake Lemon shoreline stabilization completion as presented and to make final payment of \$11,775.70 to the Lake Lemon Conservancy District. The motion was seconded by Bill Mann and carried.

Jim Ray distributed draft copies of financial and descriptive summaries for lake and river enhancement project proposals for fiscal year 2003-2004 funding. The proposals will be discussed in detail at the State Board's July meeting.

District Issues

Pete Hippensteel distributed copies of the State Board of Accounts' certified audit for Porter SWCD. In accordance with state statutes, the audit has been referred to the Attorney General's office.

Chairman's Report

Pete Hippensteel stated that he would send a letter of appreciation to Harold Doremire in recognition of his upcoming retirement.

Hippensteel noted that the annual election of State Board chairman and vice-chairman will be held at the July meeting, with terms commencing in August.

Division of Soil Conservation Director's Report

Harry Nikides introduced Mike Molnar, recently hired as the Lake Michigan Coastal Program coordinator. Molnar will be stationed at the Division's Indianapolis office.

Nikides called attention to the Supervisor Summer Splash meeting, August 1-2, at the Abe Martin Lodge in Brown County State Park, Nashville.

Nikides advised that DNR deputy director Paul Ehret is recovering at home following his recent hospitalization.

The Division's allotment for fiscal year 2003-2004 funding was received without the mandatory five percent reversion applied to state general fund accounts. The Division will be required to absorb a 0.4 percent increase in fringe benefit costs, as will all state agencies. Several districts have telephoned requesting information about annual fund distribution; each district will receive \$10,000 by late July or early August.

IDEM Report

Senior environmental manager Doug Campbell distributed copies of a watershed plan checklist, which outlines federal requirements for local groups seeking Section 319 or Section 205(j) funding for watershed management projects. Campbell also distributed copies of schedules for the IDEM-sponsored grant seminars, which are being held to assist applicants with preparation of their grant requests. The deadline submitting applications for 2004 grants is October 1, 2003.

Public Comment

Farm Services Agency program specialist Ron Birt introduced newly hired conservation assistant Gail Peas, who will work at FSA's state office in Indianapolis. Peas, formerly a resource specialist with the Division of Soil Conservation, will work primarily with the CRP sign-ups. Birt stated that new technology, incorporating geographic information systems and Arc-View software into the CRP database, appears to be working successfully to improve sign-up procedures.

Next Meeting

The next State Soil Conservation Board meeting will be Tuesday, July 8, 2003.

David Avery moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Travis Nolcox. The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Dorothy Corns

Approved July 8, 2003:

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